

**Testimony of Dr. Rebecca Andrews
UConn Health**

**Appropriations Committee
February 15, 2017**

Re: UConn Health Budget

Co-Chairs, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of the Committee, my name is Rebecca Andrews and I am a resident of Canton, CT. I am a primary care provider at UConn Health currently, but I am a product of the UConn Health system having been a medical student, medical resident, and patient here as well. I have been seeing patients and training the internal medicine residents in special tracks designed for primary care for the past 9 years.

Thank you for all of your incredible support for UConn Health. Through the state investments in UConn Health, from Bioscience CT to your regular investments in our Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine, this support has enabled UConn to become a top-tier academic medical center that provides tremendous benefit to the state and the region.

I understand that the challenges you face in trying to balance the State budget are daunting, but I would like to tell you my story and why that funding is worth the return on investment to the state.

I came from the Boston area and I had the luck of being accepted to two medical schools. I chose UConn because of their approach to us as individuals and wanting to develop us as people not just doctors. I fully believe that the reason I get invited to lecture on communication across the country, and the reason my patients stay with me, is the result of the way UConn trains doctors. I chose to stay for residency because I wanted to be a part of this family. I am proof that supporting the university does what it is supposed to...I have lived here ever since and am part of the primary care workforce of CT.

UConn Health hired me after I had been in practice for 3 years to see patients and to train residents in primary care. That program, supported by our organization, has been very successful - over 70% go into primary care which is unheard of in internal medicine and many of them stayed in the state. Anthony Yoder, one such primary care doctor, is working for CHC Inc in a community health center, Saira Cherian is working at UConn Health, Ellie and Laura worked for UConn Health initially but moved on (one is still in the state but the other had to move for family reasons), we have three residents graduating this year and 2 are staying in the state and at least another two slotted for the following year who are getting ready to sign contracts. In a state that has the oldest population of doctors on average, we really need to foster continued support of our state medical school and residency/fellowship programs to prevent a crisis in health care access. And I will take this moment to remind you, that every day at UConn, I take care of patients who have been turned away from other providers and offices due to insurance, missed appointments, etc.

I want to thank you for the opportunity to voice my passion for UConn and UConn Health. I can only imagine the difficult decisions you must make at this time but I cannot say it in any other way - we are vital to the health of this state and I urge you to minimize the cuts to UConn Health.